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ABSTRACT

This guide resulted from the Teachers Assisting Teachers (T.A.T.) Program, which was established to address specific staff development issues that were created by the implementation of the National Workplace Literacy Program. The TAT program pairs workplace literacy teachers as mentors to help both teachers improve their teaching skills. Two projects are suggested for mentoring: (1) the Bow Tie project allows two teachers to share the responsibilities of teaching a class, with the teachers exchanging responsibilities and roles at the midpoint of the course; and (2) the Wagon Wheel project allows one teacher to observe the other participating teacher, offer feedback, and guide discussion. Project materials include the following: lists of teacher responsibilities, schedules, requirements, a professional survey, tips and questions for successful sharing partnerships, a partnership agreement, a guide for a midpoint meeting for the teachers, a guide for a final meeting, and a program evaluation form. (KC)

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NATIONAL WORKPLACE LITERACY PROGRAM

TEACHERS ASSISTING TEACHERS
T.A.T. PROGRAM

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PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Teachers Assisting Teachers (T.A.T.) Program was established to address specific staff development issues that were created by the implementation of the National Workplace Literacy Grant. The National Workplace Literacy and the Adult Education Program, both housed in the division of Community Education and Economic Development, draw largely from the same pool of instructors, many of whom they share. Ninety five percent of the instructors are part-time with per-course contracts. Many of them have long-term teaching experience in "classroom based" adult education, but usually no experience in the workplace setting. Even though an orientation to the program and a series of workshops effectively address some of their training needs, more support is necessary to help them make a successful transition into the workplace. Workplace teachers work in isolation, they are separated from their peers, and from the support systems available to teachers in educational institutions. Supplementing the more "traditional" forms of staff development with a professional partnership/mentoring relationship is a way of addressing this need.

THE T.A.T. PROGRAM (TEACHERS ASSISTING TEACHERS)

National Workplace Literacy Program Mentoring Program for Part-Time Instructors

GOAL

To demonstrate and implement the processes of a mentoring program that can be used and modeled among part-time instructors in adult education programs

OBJECTIVE

To facilitate the sharing of philosophies, ideas, strategies, styles, and techniques among part-time instructors in order to foster their growth as professionals

OUTCOMES

- To create a sense of community
- To promote reflective and enthusiastic instructors
- To improve the quality of instruction
- To enhance professional skills and knowledge
- To facilitate sharing of philosophies and ideas
- To foster positive attitudes toward students
- To gain sufficient exposure to resources

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MODEL PART-TIME TEACHER IN THE PROGRAM

EACH PARTICIPATING TEACHER ...

1. likes to help colleagues and has good interpersonal skills
2. is respectful
3. won't consider his/her partner an intrusion or bother
4. has the necessary time to commit
5. is responsible and well organized
6. has teaching experience and strong professional interest
7. has analytical acuity
8. is aware that many styles, techniques, and philosophies of teaching are effective
9. encourages professional growth
10. is willing to learn
11. is open to receiving and giving constructive feedback
12. has a reflective approach to his/her own teaching

THE T.A.T. PROGRAM

The *Bow Tie* project allows the two teachers to share the responsibilities of teaching a class. Teacher A and Teacher B will exchange responsibilities and assume each other's role at mid-point of the course.

THE BOW TIE PROJECT

TEACHER A RESPONSIBILITIES :

1. To plan the class
2. To teach one-half of the course
3. To foster discussion about classroom and instructor practices
4. To keep a reflective journal (dialogue, shared, or individual)
5. To audio or video tape one class session

TEACHER B RESPONSIBILITIES :

1. To observe the class
2. To record ideas, observations, and class activities
3. To create questions and ideas for discussions
4. To teach one-half of the course
5. To keep a reflective journal (dialogue, shared, or individual)

SCHEDULE :

- 4 hours per week of class time commitment
 - 3 hours per week of interaction (see Richards & Lockhart's book for discussion topics)
 - 1 hour per week of journal writing
-
- 8 hours per week for the length of the course

REQUIREMENTS :

1. Two required meetings with CLC grant staff -- a mid-point and a final meeting for course
2. One to two journal entries per week
3. Complete the T.A.T. survey and evaluation form
4. Participate in one follow-up mentor program group discussion
5. Read Chapter 1 of Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms by Jack Richards and Charles Lockhart

THE T.A.T. PROGRAM

The Wagon Wheel project allows one teacher to observe the other participating teacher, offer feedback, and guide discussion.

THE WAGON WHEEL PROJECT

TEACHER A RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. To observe the class
2. To give feedback
3. To engage in discussion with the partner
4. To keep a reflective journal (dialogue, shared, or individual)
5. To help in an appropriate teaching assistant role

TEACHER B RESPONSIBILITIES :

1. To teach the class
2. To create questions and ideas for discussion
3. To submit lesson plans for the partner to review
4. To keep a reflective journal (dialogue, shared, or individual)
5. To audio or video tape one class session

SCHEDULE :

- 2 hours per week of providing feedback, discussion, materials creation, review, reflection
- 2 hours per week of classroom time for Teacher A assisting Teacher B
- 1 hour per week of journal writing

5 hours per week (Teacher A) and 3 hours per week (Teacher B)

REQUIREMENTS :

1. Two required meetings with CLC grant staff -- one at mid-point and a final course meeting
2. One to two journal entries per week
3. Completion of the T.A.T. evaluation form
4. Participate in one follow-up mentor program group discussion
5. Read Chapter 1 of Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms by Jack Richards and Charles Lockhart

PROFESSIONAL SURVEY

Dear Participating Teacher:

In order to provide introductory information for your participating partner and reflection for yourself, please complete the following. Please read the statements below and place the appropriate number before each characteristic according to the following scale:

- 1** I consistently demonstrate this trait
- 2** I occasionally demonstrate this trait
- 3** I seldom demonstrate this trait

Motivation	Creativity	Learning
☐ Persistent	☐ Elaborate on ideas	☐ Use a broad vocabulary
☐ Strive for perfection	☐ Display imagination	☐ Possess a large storehouse of information
☐ Assertive	☐ Criticize constructively	☐ Process information quickly
☐ Organize/structure situations	☐ Accept constructive criticism	☐ Read a great deal
☐ Evaluate events	☐ Flexible in new situations	☐ Display curiosity
☐ Good attention span	☐ Sense of humor	☐ Generate many ideas
☐ Finish activities/assignments	☐ Able to revise	☐ Independent
☐ Responsible	☐ Use various forms of expression	☐ Deal with abstract ideas well
☐ Set high standards for self	☐ Original	☐ Enjoy research
☐ Bored with routine tasks	☐ Risk-taker	☐ Interested in high-level problems

Please also answer the question : **As an instructor, if you were to be absent for a week from your classroom , what type of teacher would you want to substitute?**

TIPS & QUESTIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SHARING PARTNERSHIPS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. A partnership takes curiosity . | Can you identify topics you want to explore?
Can you be creative? |
| <hr/> | |
| 2. A partnership takes motivation . | Can you accept the challenge? |
| <hr/> | |
| 3. A partnership takes planning . | Can you be well organized?
Can you find time in your busy schedule? |
| <hr/> | |
| 4. A partnership takes work . | Can you handle responsibility, do research,
complete assignments, and critically think? |
| <hr/> | |
| 5. A partnership takes maturity . | Can you accept failure as well as success,
and learn from your mistakes?
Can you ask for help when you need it?
Can you handle a working relationship with
another adult? |
| <hr/> | |
| 6. A partnership takes courtesy . | Can you speak politely and listen respectfully? |
| <hr/> | |
| 7. A partnership takes commitment . | Can you go the extra mile?
Can you be prepared and enthusiastic? |
| <hr/> | |
| 8. A partnership takes communication . | Can you listen effectively?
Can you communicate on a cognitive and meta-
cognitive level? |
| <hr/> | |

REMEMBER!

A partnership isn't necessarily over when it ends. If you establish a good relationship with your partner, stay in touch with him or her after the experience is over. Teachers are interested in each other!

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

I, _____, agree to adhere to the requirements, responsibilities, and schedule of the T.A.T. (Teachers Assisting Teachers) program as defined by the College of Lake County's National Workplace Literacy Program.

signature

date

MID-POINT MEETING FOR THE T.A.T. PROGRAM

I. Questions for Both Participating Teachers

A. What are some of the things you've learned about each other personally?

B. When and where do you communicate with each other?

C. How much time are you finding is necessary to discuss:

1. the class content? _____
2. the methodologies/approaches? _____
3. the learners? _____
4. the sharing of ideas and support to each other? _____

D. How is the journal writing progressing?

1. what are topics you are writing about?

--the teaching? _____

--the students? _____

--yourself as a teacher? _____

--the mentoring relationship? _____

2. What are the challenges you've encountered in this activity?

3. Do you see a relationship between this journal writing and reflection and insight about teaching?

E. What ideas from Chapter 1 of *Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms* did you find most useful?

1. Were the reflection questions helpful in your journal writing?
2. Do you think other chapters from this book would be valuable in this mentoring relationship or in your teaching?

II. Questions for The *Bow Tie* Teachers

- A. How are you structuring discussions?
- B. Are you ready to assume a new role in the class?

III. Question for The *Wagon Wheel* Teachers

- A. What methods are you using to observe the class?
- B. Do you have any issues/concerns about being observed?

IV. Evaluation

- A. What has been the most rewarding aspect of this mentoring program?
- B. What has been the most challenging aspect of this mentoring program?
- C. What _____ do you have for us at this time?

suggestions _____

recommendations _____

complaints _____

compliments _____

TEACHERS ASSISTING TEACHERS MENTORING PROGRAM FINAL MEETING

I. Overview of meeting objectives.

Presenters will briefly remind participants of the nature of the two mentoring programs.

II. Written evaluation of program

III. Sharing of experiences

- A. Participants work in two groups
(According to Teacher A and Teacher B roles)

They are to discuss the following questions:

What one thing did you find enjoyable about the program?

What one thing did you find difficult about the program?

- B. Participants then work in pairs

They are to discuss the following question:

How did this experience fit into your own personal professional development goals?

Share discussions with whole group

IV. Analyze experiences

Participants work with different partners, and write their answers to the following questions, which are posted in a carousel format on the walls. After pairs have discussed their answers and each individual writes his or her answer on each piece of paper, the whole group will review the answers, with each participant presenting a page.

1. What do you need to focus on at this point in your development as a teacher?

2. Do you think you need a more thorough orientation in your role as mentor mentee?

3. *How would you select participating teachers? List 2 or 3 criteria.*
4. *How do you prefer to learn when it comes to issues of professional development?*
5. *How were differences of opinions resolved? (For example, textbook use, teaching styles, types of activities, sequencing of lesson, etc.)*
6. *What principles and beliefs inform your teaching? Did those principles and beliefs change or become clearer during the process of mentoring?*

V. Journal Fishbowl Activity

Each participant will draw an index card and respond in written form to the question on the card. When finished, the card will be placed back in the bowl and then one by one the cards will be drawn by the participant, read aloud, commented on, and discussed with the entire group.

The index cards will have the following questions:

1. *Who is the most suitable audience for my journal? Why?*
2. *What is my role as an adult educator?*
3. *Why do I teach the way I do?*
4. *Should I teach differently?*
5. *What makes a journal reflective?*
6. *Here are two other effective ways to use journals:*
 - a. *Dialogue journals between participating teachers*
 - b. *Periodic group discussion about common topics raised in journals**Choose one topic (a or b) and reflect on it in writing.*

VI. Wrap-up and future opportunities

EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

1. My responsibilities were described adequately.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. The reading material was appropriate and informative.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
3. The mid-point meeting was helpful.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
4. The mentoring relationship was meaningful in terms of discussions held, ideas exchanged, and experiences shared.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
5. Keeping a journal aided in providing professional insights and reflecting on my role in the program.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
6. My participation did not cause significant inconvenience in the performance of my job or other professional responsibilities.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
7. This program was a good source for professional development.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
8. I would consider being a mentor to a future colleague.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Please respond to the following questions about the entire T.A.T. Program

9. What was the most exciting part of your partnership?
10. What was the most challenging part of your partnership?
11. What recommendations do you have for the designers and implementers of the T.A.T. Program?
12. Do you anticipate that you will keep in contact with your teaching partner?
13. On a scale of 1-10, indicate how valuable you feel this program was for you.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not valuable				OK					Valuable